

Thursday, February 25, 2010

To: Admin Team
Digital Leaders
6th Grade Teachers for 2010-11

From: Andrew Torris

Re: Grade 6 Computer resources for 2010-11

Below you will find the philosophical underpinnings to the grade 6 laptop program for 2010-11. I hope this answers many of your questions around the direction that SAS Ed Programs will expect next year.

Laptops for Grade 6 Students- A transitional approach to student and family ownership

In surveying the schools around the world who have transitioned young middle school students and older elementary students into laptop ownership, many have noted that an “educational year” of 1:1 laptop use is appropriate and recommended.

As we are experiencing this year with our 7th grade students, we know that when younger children are handed a computer an certain amount of experimentation and game playing is normal and the supervision requirements for these laptops requires additional efforts.

Thus beginning in 2010-11 grade 6 students at SAS will begin our laptop program in a transitional year program.

This approach will look like this:

- All Grade 6 classrooms would be fully 1:1
- All computers will be school owned, and no tech fee will be required from the parents and children. Optional insurance may be offered.
- All students will be assigned a computer installed with a bag, lock and school software.
- These machines will then remain in the ownership of SAS and be checked out to individual students for use at school for the first few weeks of the school year and then to be taken to and from school and home.
- This will make laptop ownership only in grade 7-12 after full implementation of the 1:1 program in 2012.
- 6th grade students will not be allowed to bring their own computers to school next year.

Classroom Expectations for Students:

Like our other 1:1 classrooms, the computer will be an expected and relied up tool. In that the students will be taking responsibility for it's care and maintenance, a student and parent orientation meeting will happen early in the school year to introduce the laptop program to the parents and students and give them clear direction on the background of the program, behavioral expectations, background on breakage issues, service issues, etc. Please see the “Learning with Laptops Handbook” for further details.

Program Expectations of the Divisional Leaders and Classroom Teachers:

Like our colleagues in grade 7-11, the expectation is that we use the laptops as a key instructional tool, when appropriate. It is clearly the expectation of the SAS educational programs department that our educational resources and the delivery of instruction be strongly augmented by the use of this powerful digital tool. This, of course, means different things to different instructors, but it is the expectation that all employees focus their professional development on the use of this tool, and how the “digitize” and update the lesson delivery

methods to meet the National Educational Technology standards for their students and themselves as teachers.

- Laptops will not and should not go home immediately at the beginning of the year. A transitional approach means that:
 - students will have time to learn the use of software, care and maintenance, digital citizenship concepts, time management, etc.
 - teachers will be able to phase in students not only to the use of the computer but also to being a middle school student. Both have implications on behavior, learning styles, relationships with peers and teachers.
 - parents will have a special night to be allowed to come to SAS, learn about the 1:1 program and understand their son's or daughter's responsibilities.
 - parents will be given the option to buy into a self-insurance scheme that will provide financial resources for breakage, physical damage, loss or theft.
 - Laptop should begin going home periodically (1-4 times a week) within the first 60 calendar days of the school year.
 - Laptops should begin going home regularly (5-7 times a week) after the first 61 calendar days.
 - Laptops should be allowed to go home during holidays.
 - Classroom infrastructure needs to be address. Storage and charging stations for overnight charging needs to be provided. Building principals and technology specialists will be asked to work with Ed Programs and Support Services to create solutions.

Teacher Training:

The Ed Programs department along with the Digital Leaders team will offer an "Out In Shanghai Days" experience for all 5th and 6th Grade teachers in the spring (Mid to Late May).

Continuing professional development will be delivered through the fall of 2010 at the building level. Teachers are encouraged to take courses during the summer time either online or through the various universities, colleges and Apple offered opportunities in the summer time.

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